



R. L. and E. D. Forkum

THE work of R. L. and E. D. Forkum—exemplified, as it is and has been for years, by the pictorial advertisements that served as its vehicle—constitutes at once a distinct innovation in "commercial" art, as well as a unique achievement in art itself. For, be it known that to this magic name and initials belongs the credit for opening the gates of pictorial advertising to a creative medium that was not only commercially effective, but truly and exquisitely artistic.

Inquiry into the singular and delightful appeal that is made by the Forkum paintings reveals little save an abiding spirit of supreme beauty and an endlessly variable theme which leads one blissfully and heedlessly on, as through the mazes of the Dominant Seventh. This analogy to music, though it does not explain the popularity of the Forkum art, makes known the source of its inspiration and something of its magnificent purpose. That purpose, simply defined, is to bring painting to the borderland of music, in which contiguity, if not union, of the two arts might be permanently established.

Thus, in "Evening Rhapsody," the picture here reproduced, is portrayed the bell-toned concert of nature at dusk. In it are shown the frogs,

the locusts and the katydids, blending together in sweet nocturnal chorus, and augmented by the farmer bent over his creaking windlass, in the border, and the boy herding his flock of sheep homeward. But deeper than this lies the subtle intention of the artist himself—for the work is that of a man inspired by the one woman, his wife.

The explanation of the artist's method and purpose, as well as the question so often asked by his many friends as to why he puts so much detail into each picture, is best contained in Mr. Forkum's own words:

"If a painter," he has stated, "would build upon his theme as the composer of music does, using the sister laws of harmony and counterpoint in his line and color grouping, tonal gradations and interweaving of secondary themes, he would achieve a result infinitely nearer to the true mission of the painter's art."

And so, taking as his precept the dictum that "one lives with a picture," Mr. Forkum invests each painting with the qualities which will prove to the beholder an everlasting source of mystery, fascination and charm. Music, it may be whispered, is his major interest, his ruling passion, and this, created by Mrs. Forkum, is the direct fount of inspiration that visualizes sonorous impressions and transforms sound into color—the rare, lovely color of the Forkum art.—David Arnold Balch.

